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NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS

IN CHARGE OF

ELISABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

TREATMENT OF BURNS BY PARAFFIN.—Lieutenant-Colonel Hull, of the Royal Army Medical Corps has investigated the treatment of burns by ambrine and believes that under this treatment slight burns heal rapidly and those severely burned more completely than under ordinary methods. He thinks better results are obtained by the addition of an antiseptic and evolved a formula containing beside the paraffin, resorcin, eucalyptus oil and olive oil. This was applied sometimes with a brush and sometimes as a spray. His investigation is reported in the *British Medical Journal*.

IPECAC AND DYSENTERY.—The *Journal of the American Medical Association*, in an editorial, comments on the use of ipecac, which is the root of a Brazilian herb, in cases of dysentery. In 1817, the so-called active principle, emetin, was isolated by Pelletier. In 1910, Vedder, in Manila, demonstrated that emetin, even in highly dilute solutions, kills *amoeba histolytica*, the cause of amebic dysentery. Experience indicates that by its use amebic abscesses of the liver can be prevented and even cured. It may also be of diagnostic value in distinguishing between amebic and bacillary dysentery. Improvement follows its use if the former variety is present. It is given to troops in the Mediterranean on the slightest suspicion of dysentery.

THE ABUSE OF SOAP.—A writer in an English medical journal notes the fact that even the best soap may be wrongly used. The alkali may abrade and furrow the epidermis and produce slight scaliness over the prominences of the face and hands, the parts most washed. Furfuraceous patches on the faces of children are frequently seen, due to the abuse of soap, these are apt to be inoculated with microorganisms and finally resemble impetigo. It is pointed out that nurses often use too much soap on their patients, especially when these are confined to bed. The secretion of the skin is sluggish and the excessive removal of the natural oil leaves the skin rough and branny. The delicate skin of the new-born is sometimes irritated by the zeal of the nurse in rubbing too strenuously with soap and water to remove the vernix caseosa. Frictional eczemas are invariably aggravated by soap and water.

TOBACCO.—Switzerland proposes a government monopoly of tobacco. A Swiss writer says tobacco smoke is to all intents and purposes a dry distillation of tobacco which comprises a number of toxic

substances; as a result it gives rise to a mixture of toxic effects. The fumes are poisonous.

VENERAL DISEASE.—*The Journal of the American Medical Association*, in an editorial, mentions the work of the British Commission on Venereal Diseases. A strong feeling has been growing up that society must make an organized effort against venereal diseases. The report of the commission is restrained and temperate. It recommends against compulsory notification at present. It urges the importance of education as to the seriousness of venereal diseases and the dangers of their transmission. It recommends the inculcating of sexual restraint. In early and continuous treatment it finds the effective weapon against the plague, and in widespread state provision for the diagnosis and treatment of the diseases in a practical way, the best hope of success in lessening them. Most of the recommendations were carried with legal effect four months after the report was presented.

NATIONAL EGG COLLECTION.—The London letter of the *Medical Record* says that the aim of the national egg collection is to ensure that every sick and wounded soldier and sailor shall have the needful supply of new laid eggs to assist him toward recovery. Two hundred and fifty thousand eggs are needed every week for the British wounded in France alone.

VAGINAL DELIVERY AFTER CESAREAN SECTION.—*The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* says the majority of obstetricians consider that a Cesarean section performed once, involves the same operation in all succeeding pregnancies. It cites a number of cases delivered normally after previous Cesarean sections. In one case a manual examination of the interior of the uterus after delivery revealed no trace of the former Cesarean section.

TEETH IN THE TONGUE.—An Italian medical journal reports the case of a soldier who had been wounded by a bullet that had traversed the cheek, carried away the right upper molars and pierced the tongue. Two months afterwards, the tongue remaining sore and swollen, it was examined and a hard object touched by the probe was thought to be a piece of shell. An incision was made and several teeth were extracted. It was believed that, had they not been disturbed, they would have become encysted, making what might be called a synthetic dermoid cyst.

DIET TEST.—*The Medical Record* states that under the auspices of the Life Extension Institute there was conducted in New York a three weeks experiment to prove that sufficient food for an active man could be supplied at a cost of twenty-five cents a day for raw material. Thirteen members of the police force were the subjects. At the end

of three weeks twelve had gained collectively 29½ pounds, the remaining man remaining stationary in weight. Three thousand calories a day was considered necessary for an active man. It would be interesting to know just what foods were obtained for this small sum.

THE MOUTH.—A writer in the *Journal of the Allied Dental Societies* says the human jaws have a crushing power of 240 pounds to the square inch. The mouth is like a tropical jungle with its climatic conditions of heat, moisture and darkness and is capable of producing the rankest vegetation in its surroundings of decay. To the healthy or unhealthy condition of the mouth is due many of the pathological conditions which many persons now suffer, often in ignorance of the cause. Persistent education in the care of the mouth will mean a decrease in the acute and chronic organic and degenerative diseases.

AUTOTHERAPY.—An interesting article in the *Medical Record* records the treatment of acute appendicitis, cholecystitis, by means of injections of filtered sputum, obtained from the individual affected. The writer, Dr. Charles H. Duncan, had previously been successful in treating bronchitis, pneumonia and other affections of the respiratory tract by autotherapy. He has also avoided mastoid and sinus operations by the use of the filtrate of sputum, and major operations on the female pelvis by injecting the filtrate of the discharge from the cervix.

GERMAN MEASLES.—The secretary of the New York State Department of Health says in the scarlatina form of German measles, the eruption usually involves the face, which is an extremely rare occurrence in scarlet fever. Even with a vividly red eruption involving the entire body, the fever is very much lower than would be the case if such an eruption were due to scarlet fever, and the pulse rate, usually so high in scarlet fever, is little accelerated. The throat may be remarkably reddened and extremely painful. The presence of enlarged cervical nodes is characteristic of the disease.

DIABETIC BREAD.—The *Journal of the American Medical Association* reprints from the *British Medical Journal* a recipe for a bread for diabetics made of peanut flour and casein. The formula is: peanut flour, 8 ounces; casein, 2 ounces; a pinch of salt; white of egg, 12 ounces. The white of egg is beaten to a snow and the other ingredients, previously lightly mixed, are added slowly. The bread is baked in a tin. It has the advantage of being very nice to the taste and can be cut into slices as thin as white bread.

DISEASE STATISTICS.—Scarlet fever kills over 10,000 Americans each year; pneumonia over 120,000. The death rate from typhoid has been cut in half since 1900 in the United States.